

September 18, 2025



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GOVERNMENT SHUT DOWN LOOKS NEARLY INEVITABLE

With Trump administration officials saying congressional Republicans shouldn't negotiate government funding with Democrats, it's almost a sure bet that the federal government will shut down at midnight on September 30th. That's the end of the federal fiscal year and avoiding a shutdown requires Democrats to agree to at least some temporary measure to keep it open.

Here's a simple explanation of why that's the case. If all House Republicans stick together – which hasn't been the case in other key votes – Republicans have 219 votes to the Democrats' 213. A Continuing Resolution – the measure to keep the government temporarily funded – could be drawn up and forced on the Democrats. If just 3 Republican Representatives don't agree with the CR's wording, then we're at stalemate. Let's say all 219 stick together and the House passes a "clean Continuing Resolution". In the Senate, it would take 60 Senators to agree to bring the House CR to a vote in the Senate. That's the way Senate procedures work. Republicans have only 53 of those votes, so they will need 7 Democrats to go along with them – and that's not going to happen. Unless the Democrats cave into Republican demands on the wording of the CR, there will not be enough votes to keep the government funded.

What about wording of the CR? A clean version says something like "All government departments will be funded for the next 30 days at the same funding levels as in the previous fiscal year." That's what the House Appropriations Committee proposed this week with a temporary extension of funding until November 21st. Democrats want language added that extends the tax credits for the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare") expiring at the end of this year. If that's not done, premiums for many people will increase by 50 to 75 percent. Not all Republicans agree with that, but the party leadership favors allowing the tax credits to expire if they aren't substantially reduced.

Your source of daily news will keep you up to date with the latest partisan maneuvers, but a shutdown of the government favors neither party so both continue to have a reason to prevent this stalemate from resulting in a shutdown.

WHEN WILL THE CORPS FY26 FUNDING BILL BE PASSED?

So far, the House has passed its version of the bill funding the Corps of Engineers, but the Senate version is stuck in committee. As usual, the issue is not disagreement over funding levels of the Corps. Rather, the Corps' funding is the smaller part of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill, and the chair of the subcommittee handling that bill wants to cut more from energy money than the bipartisan

leaders of the full Senate Appropriations Committee had agreed to. The issue has been deadlocked for several weeks, with no resolution yet in sight.

The House bill claims to provide full funding for the Corps' water resource development program, with a \$9.883 billion dollar level with \$1.97 billion of that total for flood and storm damage reduction activities. However, only \$37.6 million goes to coastal storm damage studies, projects, and programs. The [American Coastal Coalition](#) has called for that figure to be boosted more than 5 times to at least \$200 million. In addition, the House bill has only \$15.6 million going directly to placing sand on the nation's beaches.

WHAT DOES THE NEW ASA THINK ABOUT BEACH NOURISHMENT?

During his first appearance following his confirmation as Assistant Secretary of the Army (ASA) for Civil Works, Adam Telle was asked just that question. Here's how it was put by Rep. David Rouzer of North Carolina. "And so, I want to reiterate. You know the importance and [I] underscore the importance of beach re-nourishment. I assume the Administration and the Corps specifically, is still very much committed to that process." Secretary Telle responded, "Congressman, you are correct. In many coastal communities, beach re-nourishment is the best way to prevent storm surge flooding and other types of flooding, and that's true in your state, and it's true in many others." Let's hope those words also reflect a commitment from the administration to adequately funding beach nourishment projects.

ESTUARIES BILL MOVES FORWARD

The House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure this week has approved HR 3962. The estuaries act reauthorizes the EPA national estuaries program through 2031 and adds the Mississippi Sound to the program. Rep. Scott Perry of Pennsylvania was the lone member of the committee opposing the measure, saying "[T]hese restoration efforts should be led by state and local officials who know better the needs and constraints of the communities impacted by these programs. Moreover, we should not force others to pay for restoration efforts that those who live in the community do not prioritize enough to fund themselves.

COASTAL LEGISLATIVE DOCKET

We're tracking 149 bills affecting coastal communities. Currently, four of these bills have passed the House and are awaiting action by the Senate. These include HR 4553, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Bill (see story above) and HR 4213, the bill providing funding for FEMA. Another eight bills have passed the Senate and are awaiting consideration in the House. These include S 300, The Disaster Loan Accountability and Reform Act, and S 843, the Sea Turtle Rescue Assistance and Rehabilitation Act. A full listing of the bills we're tracking and their status can be found [here](#).

Thanks for reading WaterLog!

Howard Marlowe | President
Warwick Group Consultants, LLC
Howard.Marlowe@WarwickConsultants.Net
1717 K Street, NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 787-5770

Dan Ginolfi | Senior Public Policy Advisor
Warwick Group Consultants, LLC
Dan.Ginolfi@WarwickConsultants.Net
1717 K Street, NW, Suite 900
Washington, DC 20006
(202) 787-5770